BATMAN
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Michael Netzer
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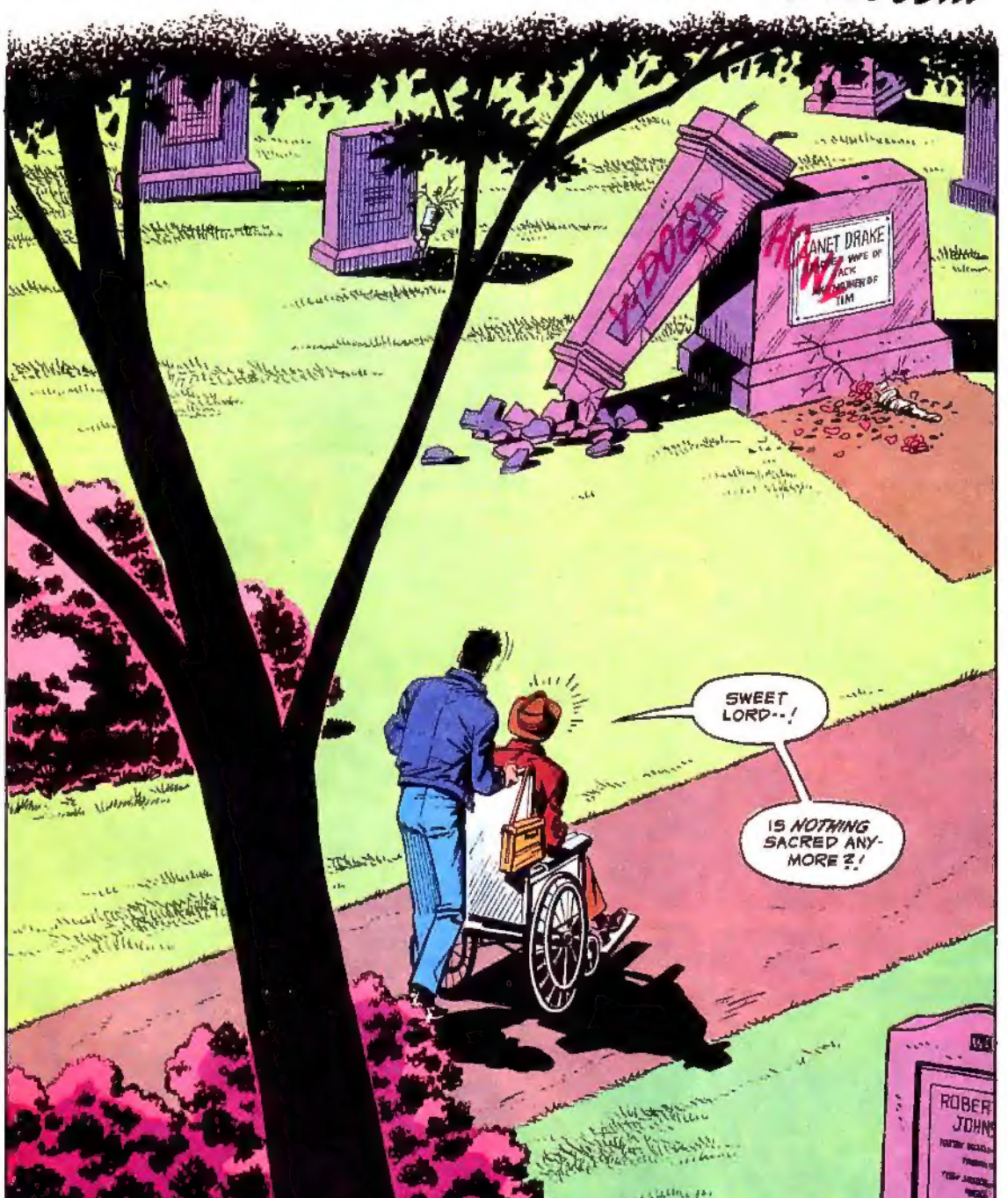
To the Father I never knew...



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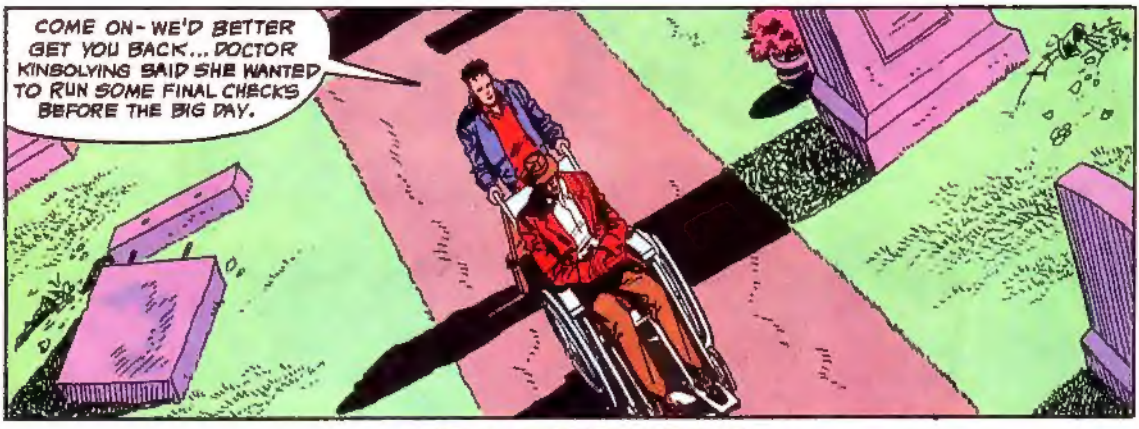
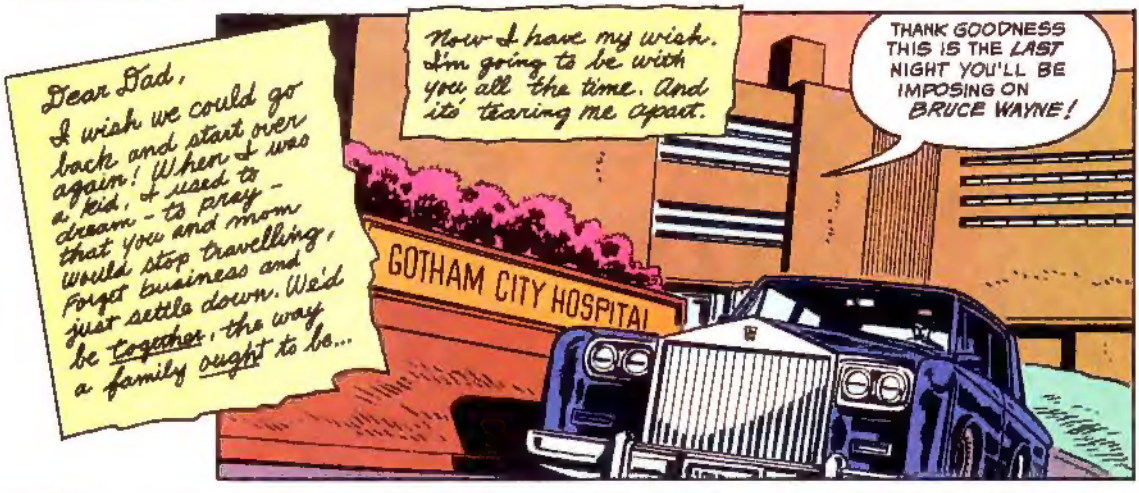
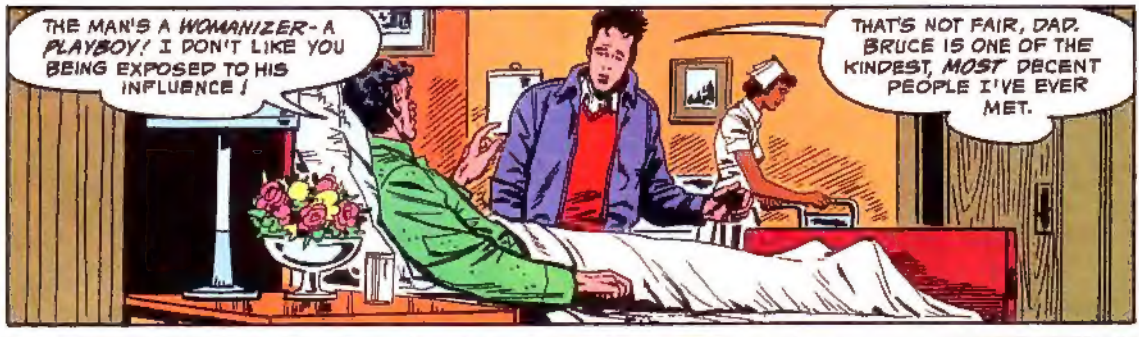
BOB KANE — BATMAN CREATOR

BATMAN 480. Late June, 1992. Published monthly by DC Comics Inc., 1325 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10019. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to BATMAN, DC Comics Subscriptions, P.O. Box 0528, Baldwin, NY 11510. Annual subscription rate $15.00. Canadian subscribers must add $6.00 for postage and GST. GST # is R125921072. All other foreign countries must add $1w.00 for postage. U.S. funds only. Copyright © 1992 DC Comics Inc. All Rights Reserved. All characters featured in this issue, the distinctive likenesses thereof, and all related indicia are trademarks of DC Comics Inc. The stories, characters and incidents mentioned in this magazine are entirely fictional. Advertising Representative: Print Advertising Representatives, 355 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10017 (212) 949-6850. Printed in Canada.
DC Comics Inc. A Warner Bros. Inc. Company G-7591

YOUR MOTHER'S GRAVE-- DESECRATED! HOW COULD THEY, TIM?
DAD--
THE ANIMALS! THEY'RE NOT FIT TO SPEAK HER NAME!
I WANT THEM CAUGHT, TIM! I WANT EVERY POLICEMAN IN GOTHAM--
DAD, PLEASE! DON'T UPSET YOURSELF. YOU KNOW WHAT THE DOCTOR KINSOLVING SAID ABOUT GETTING OVER-EXCITED--!
DAMN THE DOCTOR! YOUR MOTHER WAS THE FINEST, BRAVEST WOMAN I'VE EVER KNOWN!
I WON'T LET HER MEMORY BE SULLIED! I--
HUU! U-HUUUU! HUU!
U-HUUU! UH-HUUNH!
IT'S ALL RIGHT, DAD. DON'T PANIC.
IT'S ALL RIGHT!
THAT BETTER?
THANKS, TIM. YOU'RE A GOOD SON.
I KNOW I HAVEN'T BEEN THE FATHER I SHOULD HAVE BEEN - BUT I'LL MAKE IT UP TO YOU--
STARTING TOMORROW!
2


COME ON - WE'D BETTER GET YOU BACK... DOCTOR KINSOLVING SAID SHE WANTED TO RUN SOME FINAL CHECKS BEFORE THE BIG DAY.


Dear Dad,
I wish we could go back and start over again! When I was a kid, I used to dream - to pray - that you and mom would stop travelling, forget business and just settle down. We'd be together, the way a family ought to be...
Now I have my wish. I'm going to be with you all the time. And it's tearing me apart.
THANK GOODNESS THIS IS THE LAST NIGHT YOU'LL BE IMPOSING ON BRUCE WAYNE!
GOTHAM CITY HOSPITAL


THE MAN'S A WOMANIZER - A PLAYBOY! I DON'T LIKE YOU BEING EXPOSED TO HIS INFLUENCE!
THAT'S NOT FAIR, DAD. BRUCE IS ONE OF THE KINDEST, MOST DECENT PEOPLE I'VE EVER MET.

HE TOOK ME IN, DIDN'T HE, WHEN YOU AND MOM WERE IN HAITI? AND AFTER YOU... AFTER WHAT HAPPENED WITH THE OBEAH MAN -- IT WAS BRUCE WHO LOOKED AFTER ME. HE'S MY FRIEND!
THE "AIRHEAD PLAYBOY" IMAGE IS JUST AN INVENTION OF THE NEWSPAPERS!

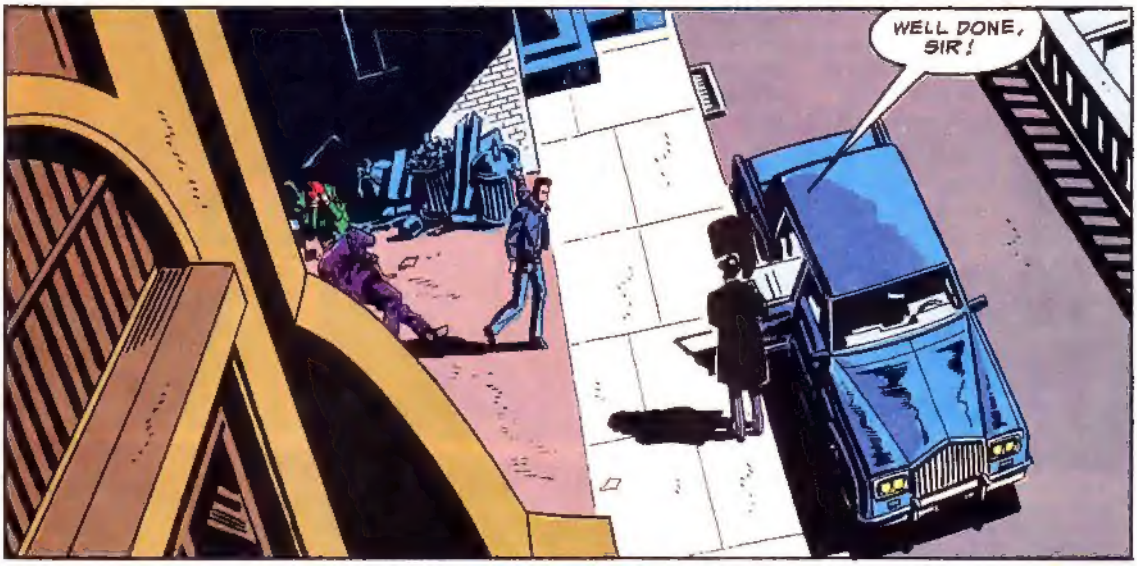
MAYBE - BUT I'M YOUR FATHER, TIM. NOT HIM!
TRY TO UNDERSTAND, SON. YOU'RE ALL I HAVE LEFT NOW. I--I DON'T WANT TO LOSE YOU, TOO!

TOMORROW, SON?
YES, DAD. TOMORROW.
3

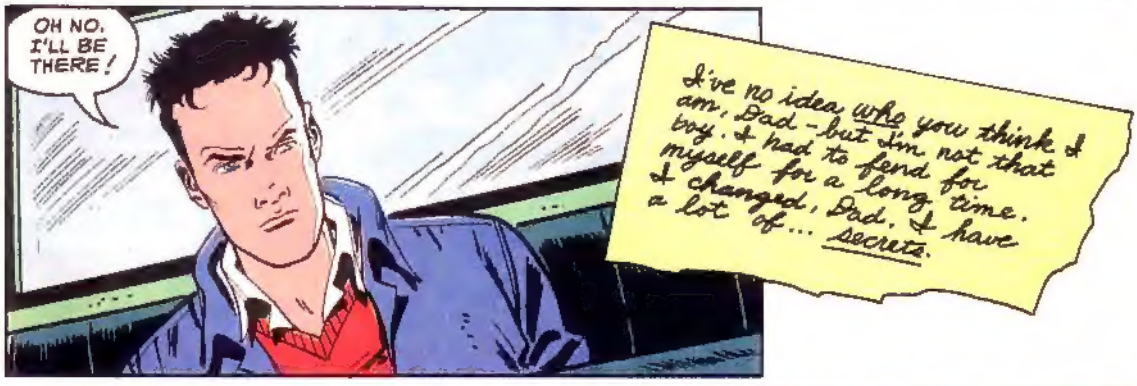
MR. DRAKE? MR. MARIN TO SEE YOU.
PHIL!
HOLD ON, TIM--!
PHIL MARIN - MY SON, TIM. TIM - PHIL'S MY C.E.O. HE'S BEEN IN CHARGE AT DRAKE INDUSTRIES WHILE I'VE BEEN IN HERE.
HEARD A LOT ABOUT YOU, TIM. I'LL HAVE TO WATCH OUT FOR MY JOB. YOUR DAD TELLS ME YOU'LL BE COMING INTO THE BUSINESS... STARTING PART-TIME NEXT WEEK.
I AM?
I MEAN, OF COURSE. WHATEVER MY FATHER WANTS.
Funny, how once you never seemed to care - at least, you never showed me that you did. And now you want to run my life.
Do you really think we can start over..?
SO...YOU WILL BE MOVING OUT, SIR?
LOOKS LIKE IT, ALFRED. HE WANTS ME TO MOVE INTO THE ROBINSON PARK PENTHOUSE WITH HIM.
NOT THE BEST OF ENVIRONMENTS FOR AN INVALID, I'D HAVE THOUGHT.
4

OH, IT'S SO UNFAIR, SIR! YOU'VE NEVER HAD A PROPER LIFE - AND YOU'VE SETTLED IN SO WELL WITH US!
WHO EVER SAID LIFE WAS FAIR, ALFRED?
HMM. YES, I RECOGNIZE THE QUOTE!
AND WHO SAID I WAS GOING..?
STOP THE CAR!
Y-DOG TURF NO TRESPAS
YOU!
WAS IT YOU WHO VANDALIZED THOSE GRAVES IN THE CEMETERY?
YEAH, SO WHAT? 'S NO BUSINESS OF YOURS!
ONE OF THEM WAS MY MOTHER'S GRAVE. YOU'VE UPSET MY FATHER!
5

AW, DIDDUMS!
I'LL UPSET YOU, TOO--
AAAGGH!
SSSSS
MY EYES!
SMART GUY, HUH? LET'S SEE YA DUCK THIS--!
I WAS ALMOST HOPING YOU'D GIVE ME THE EXCUSE..!
SSSSS


WELL DONE, SIR!

A LAST HURRAH, PERHAPS?
I'M A CHUMP
HOW DO YOU MEAN?
WELL, WITH TOMORROW AND EVERYTHING - I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT NOT BE... GOING OUT TONIGHT.


OH NO. I'LL BE THERE!
I've no idea who you think I am, Dad - but I'm not that boy. I had to fend for myself for a long time. I changed, Dad. I have a lot of... secrets.

-- SHOULD BE GOING OUT, DANCING, SOCIALIZING, MAKING FRIENDS!

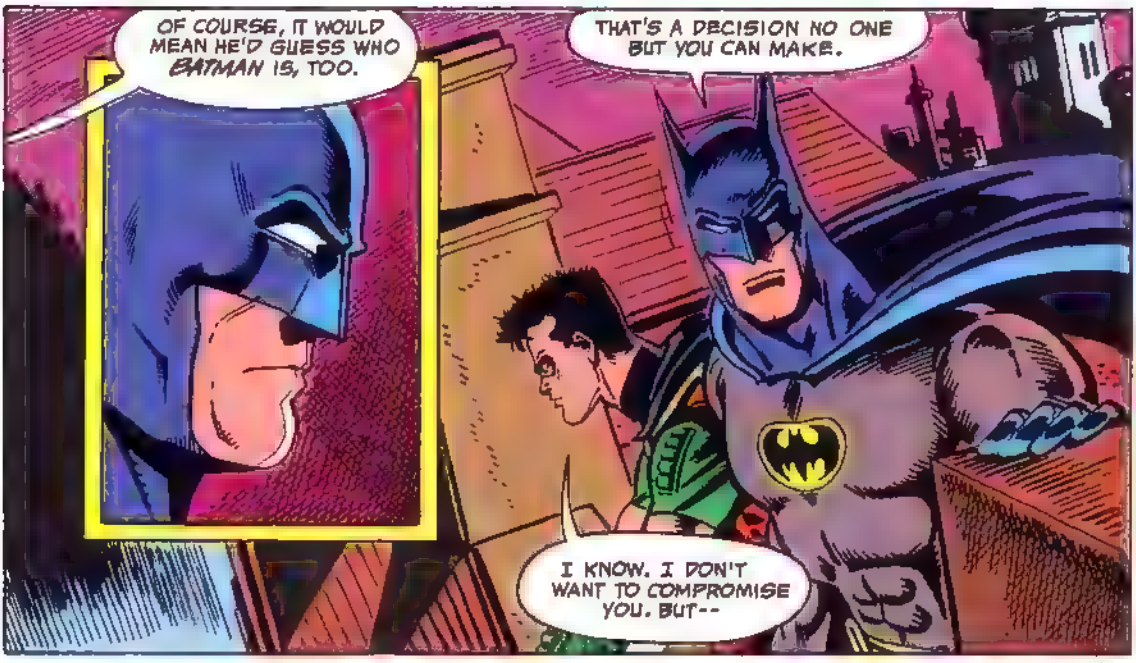
I HEAR YOU, ALFRED. BUT IT WAS TIM'S OWN CHOICE TO BECOME ROBIN. I TRIED TO DISSUADE HIM, REMEMBER!
SNIFF
SNIFF
YES, SIR. I KNOW.
IT'S JUST- IT'LL BE SO MUCH HARDER FOR HIM, HAVING HIS FATHER TO LOOK AFTER AS WELL. THE BOY WILL NEVER HAVE A CHANCE TO LEAD EVEN A SEMBLANCE OF AN ORDINARY LIFE!
WHO EVER SAID LIFE WAS FAIR, ALFRED?
WHERE IS HE?
UPSTAIRS. HE SAID HE'D A LETTER TO WRITE.
I'M HERE. SORRY TO KEEP YOU.
GRRR
TAKE TONIGHT OFF IF YOU WANT.
NO. I SHOULD BE OUT THERE. IT'S MY JOB.
8

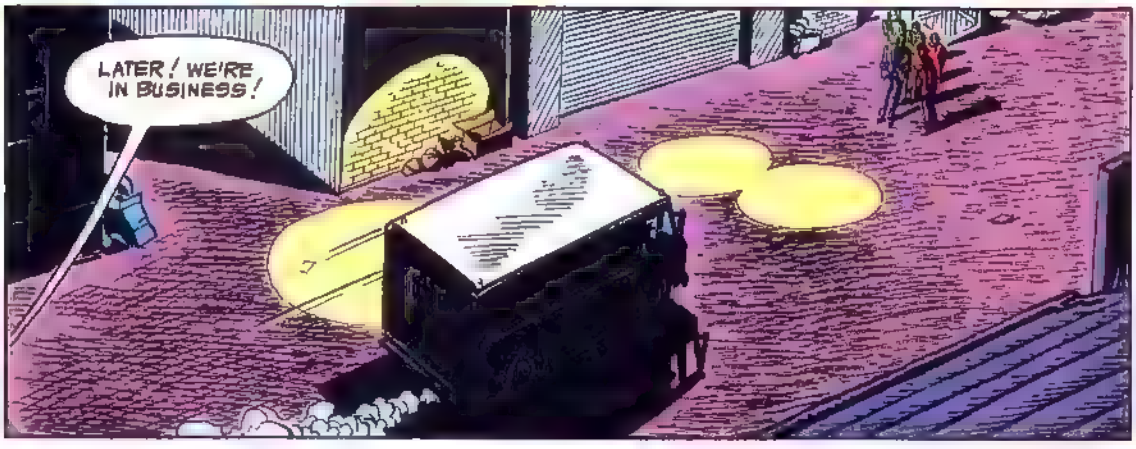
SURE YOU'RE UP TO IT?
POSITIVE. WHY? DON'T YOU THINK I AM?
HEY-IF YOU SAY SO, THAT'S GOOD ENOUGH FOR ME!
POOR LAD! HE'S TURNING INTO ANOTHER BRUCE WAYNE!
AND YET...THERE ARE THOUSANDS WHO MIGHT ONE DAY HAVE CAUSE TO THANK HIM FOR THAT!
NORMAL PATROL?

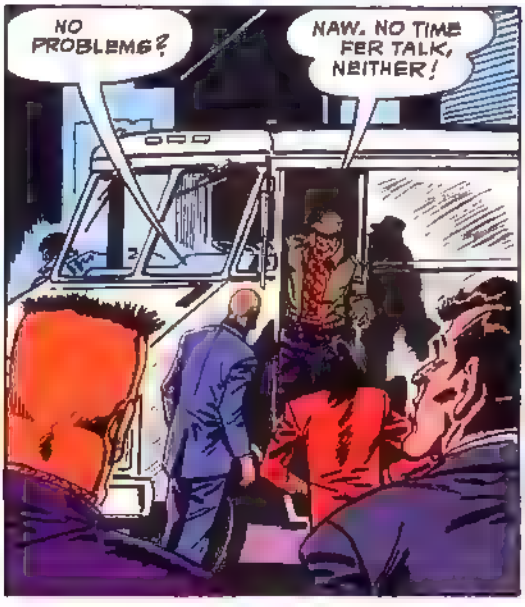
NO. I'D LIKE TO CHECK THE Y-DOGS GANG.
THOSE TWO I TOLD YOU ABOUT WERE WEARING DESIGNER CLOTHES - AND I'M TALKING VERY EXPENSIVE!
I'VE A HUNCH IT MIGHT PAY TO LOOK INTO WHERE THEY GOT THE CASH.. !
You couldn't be more wrong about Bruce Wayne. Despite what he seems, he is the only truly great man I have ever known. He... helps people. And he never asks for anything in return.
I'm not interested in your business, Dad. I've already found my place in the world. I know what I want to be!
Y-DOGS
WOTTA COUPLE CHUMPS, ALL RIGHT!
AN' WHO DID THIS TO YA? ONE PUNY RICH BRAT?
HAW HAW!
GIVE US A BREAK, RETCH! THE CREEP.. UHH, TOOK US BY SURPRISE!
WELL, YA CAN'T HANG OUT WITH THE Y-DOGS LOOKIN' LIKE THAT! WHERE'S YER STYLE, MAN?
DON'T SWEAT IT. NEXT JOB WE DO'LL SEE US RIGHT!

YER IN LUCK, SCRUFFO! THE MAN WANTS US... NOW!
"YOU'RE IN LUCK- er, SCRUFFO. THE MAN WANTS US... NOW!"
HANDY STUNT, LIP-READING! THANKS FOR TEACHING ME!
NICE WORK!
LOOKS LIKE YOUR HUNCH IS PAYING OFF.
SHOOT! THEY AIN'T HERE YET!

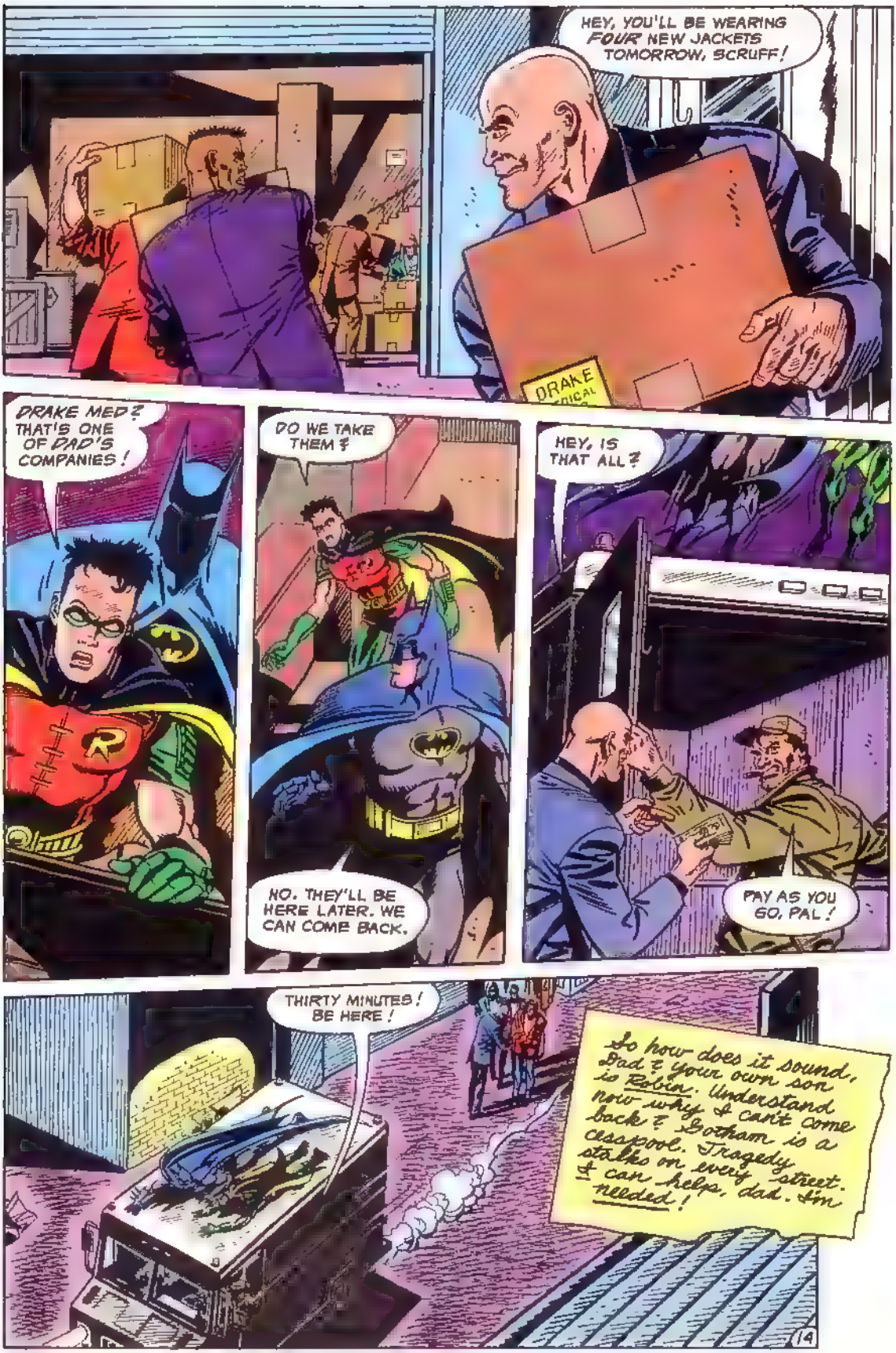
GUESS WE JUST SETTLE DOWN AN' WAIT!
I KNOW WE SHOULDN'T BRING OUR PROBLEMS ON THE JOB WITH US, BUT... DO YOU MIND IF WE TALK?
WON'T HURT THIS ONCE. YOUR FATHER--?
YES. THE DOCTOR SAYS IT'S HIGHLY UNLIKELY HE'LL EVER GET BETTER THAN HE IS NOW. EIGHTY PERCENT PARALYZED. BREATHING PROBLEMS.
IF I HAVE TO GO HOME AND LOOK AFTER HIM... HOW WILL I BE ABLE TO BE ROBIN, TOO?
HE THINKS HE'S LOSING ME-TO YOU. BUT IT'S NOT THAT. IT'S JUST... I'M NOT WHO HE THINKS I AM!
ANY SOLUTIONS?
THE ONLY ONE I CAN SEE IS - TO TELL HIM WHO I REALLY AM. I THINK MAYBE HE COULD COPE WITH THAT - UNDERSTAND. HE MIGHT ALLOW THINGS TO GO ON AS THEY ARE.


OF COURSE, IT WOULD MEAN HE'D GUESS WHO BATMAN IS, TOO.
THAT'S A DECISION NO ONE BUT YOU CAN MAKE.
I KNOW. I DON'T WANT TO COMPROMISE YOU. BUT--


LATER! WE'RE IN BUSINESS!


NO PROBLEMS?
NAW. NO TIME FER TALK, NEITHER!

YOU GOT FOUR RUNS TO UNLOAD TONIGHT. MOVE IT!
DRAKE MEDICAL INC
DRAKE


HEY, YOU'LL BE WEARING FOUR NEW JACKETS TOMORROW, SCRUFF!
DRAKE
DRAKE MED? THAT'S ONE OF DAD'S COMPANIES!
DO WE TAKE THEM?
NO. THEY'LL BE HERE LATER. WE CAN COME BACK.
HEY, IS THAT ALL?
PAY AS YOU GO, PAL!
THIRTY MINUTES! BE HERE!
So how does it sound, Dad? Your own son is Robin. Understand now why I can't come back? Gotham is a cesspool. Tragedy stalks on every street. I can help, dad. I'm needed!
14

THIS IS INSANE! WE'RE BOUND TO BE CAUGHT!
DRAKE MEDICAL INCORPORATED
BULL! THIS MIGHT BE THE LAST CHANCE WE GET. I MET DRAKE'S SON TODAY - SAYS HE'S COMING INTO THE BUSINESS. THE KID MIGHT SPOT WHAT'S GOING ON.
WE'VE BLED OFF MILLIONS SINCE THE OLD MAN WAS PARALYZED - BUT WE CAN'T COVER IT UP FOREVER.
THIS WAY, WE GET ONE FINAL HAUL - AND WITH A LITTLE LUCK, I'LL BE ABLE TO BLAME IT ON THE KID.
YOUR GANG FRIENDS SHOW ALL RIGHT?
YEAH. THEY'RE WAITIN'.
THEN HURRY IT UP!
NO NEED. YOU'RE NOT GOING ANYWHERE!
B-BATMAN!
15

STOP HIM, ROBIN!
KEEP BACK, BRAT! I'M WARNING YOU--!
KRANG
WAKK
BAPP

NEAT!

THE POLICE CAN TAKE IT FROM HERE.

COME ON. I'LL TAKE YOU HOME. TOMORROW'S A BIG DAY.

HOME?

NO. I'D LIKE TO MAKE MY OWN WAY TONIGHT.

I'LL TAKE CARE OF THE Y-DOGS!

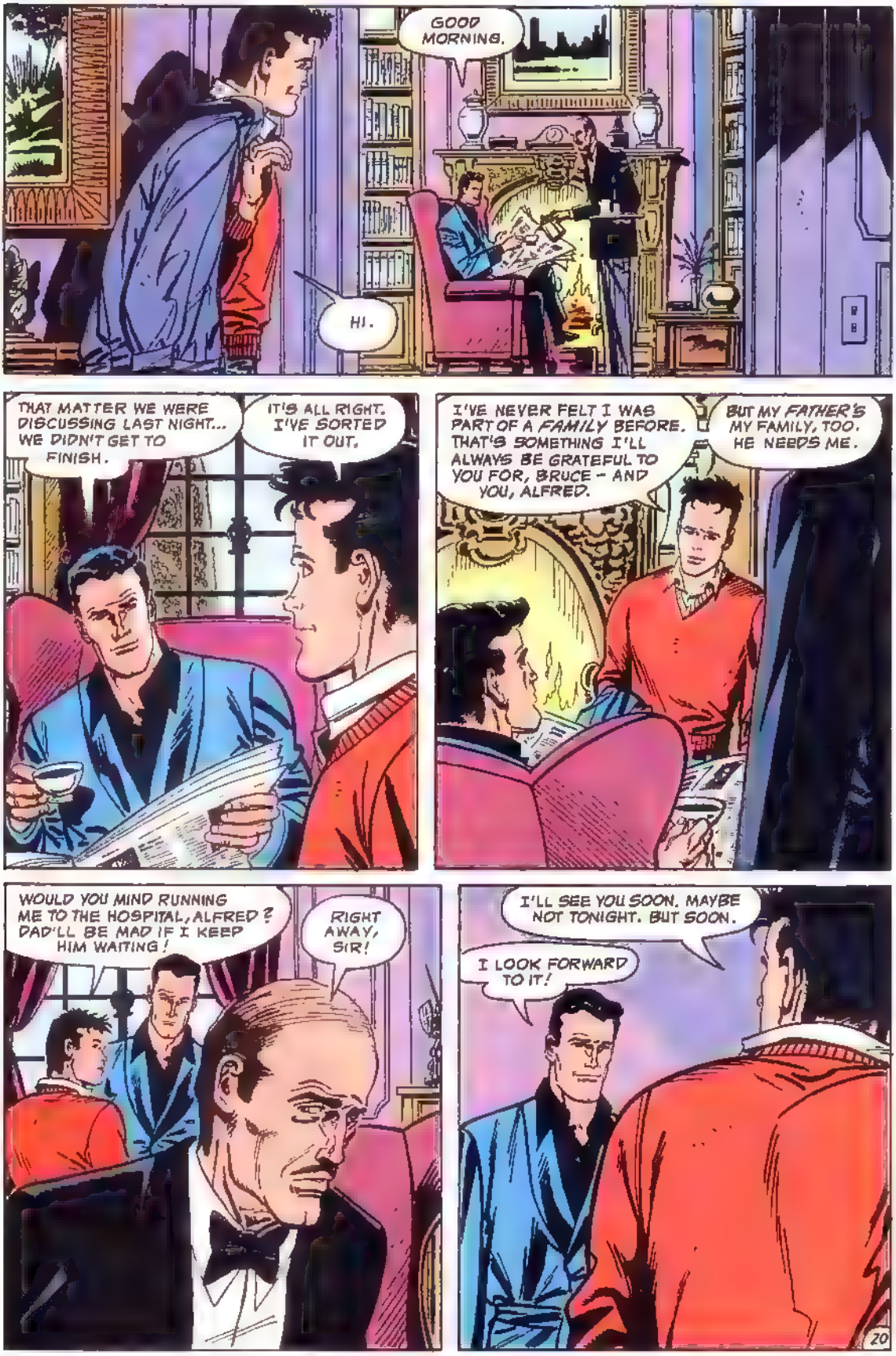
Strange, how you can come to love a city. Even one as ugly and rotten as Gotham.

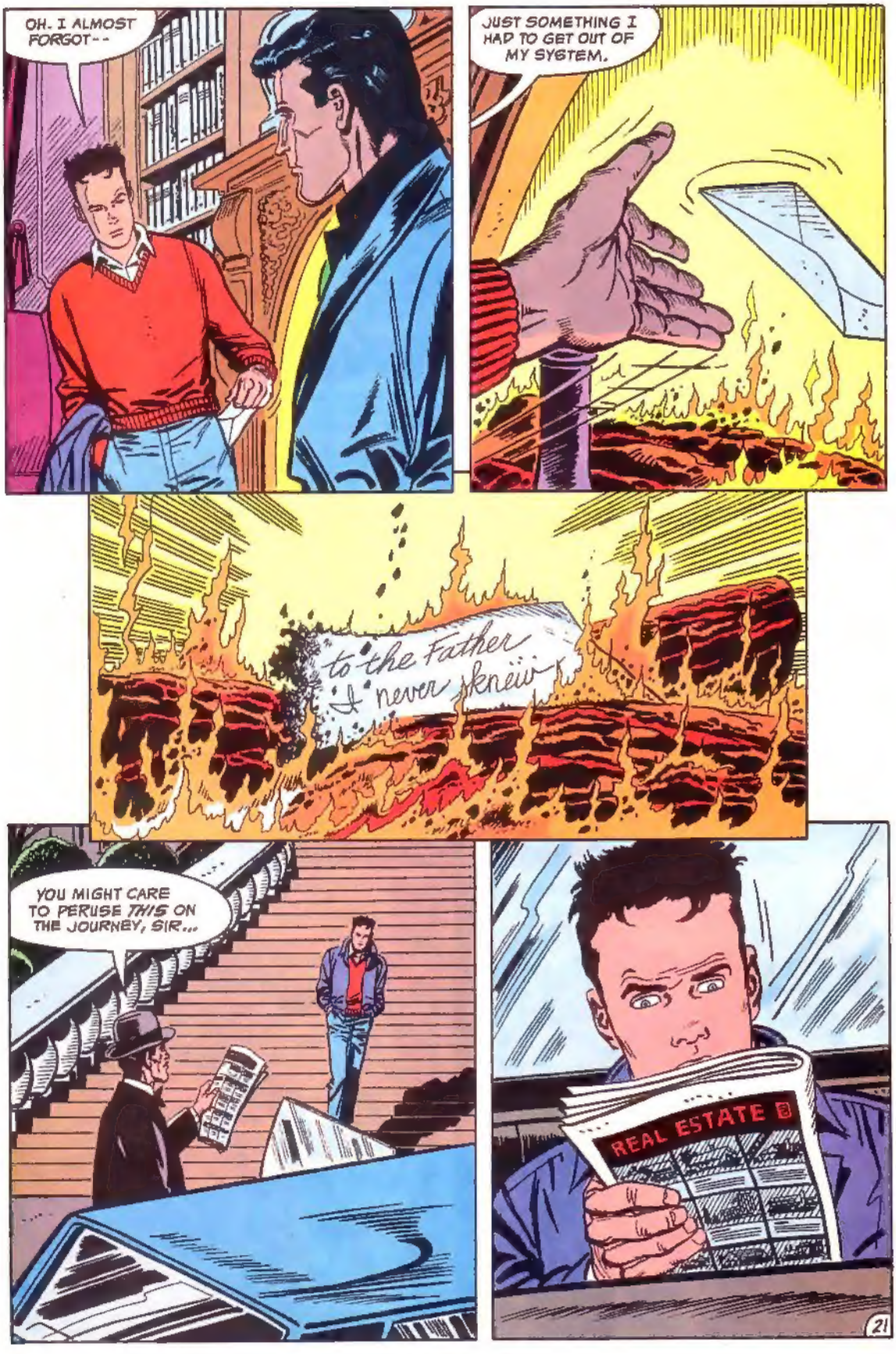
All those millions of people, the lines of their lives crossing, touching, tangling... almost as if the City itself is alive.

I love you, Dad— but I've found my place. I know who I am.

I'm part of my city.

Sometimes I wish we could start over... but I know we can't. We have to take things from exactly where we are.
TIM..?
UPSTAIRS, SIR. SAID HE HAD A LETTER TO FINISH.
This might not make a lot of sense to you. I only hope you understand.
to the father I never knew


GOOD MORNING.
HI.
THAT MATTER WE WERE DISCUSSING LAST NIGHT... WE DIDN'T GET TO FINISH.
IT'S ALL RIGHT. I'VE SORTED IT OUT.
I'VE NEVER FELT I WAS PART OF A FAMILY BEFORE. THAT'S SOMETHING I'LL ALWAYS BE GRATEFUL TO YOU FOR, BRUCE - AND YOU, ALFRED.
BUT MY FATHER'S MY FAMILY, TOO. HE NEEDS ME.
WOULD YOU MIND RUNNING ME TO THE HOSPITAL, ALFRED? DAD'LL BE MAD IF I KEEP HIM WAITING!
RIGHT AWAY, SIR!
I'LL SEE YOU SOON. MAYBE NOT TONIGHT. BUT SOON.
I LOOK FORWARD TO IT!
20


OH. I ALMOST FORGOT--
JUST SOMETHING I HAD TO GET OUT OF MY SYSTEM.
to the Father
I never knew
YOU MIGHT CARE TO PERUSE THIS ON THE JOURNEY, SIR...
REAL ESTATE
21

I THOUGHT THE COUNTRY AIR MIGHT BE GOOD FOR YOUR FATHER'S HEALTH.
FOR SALE
SPACIOUS MANSION IN 700 WOODED ACRES CLOSE TO GOTHAM CITY
GOTHAM REALTY CO
INTEREST RATES - 5%
AND OF COURSE, AS IT'S RIGHT NEXT DOOR TO MASTER BRUCE'S...
WELL, IT MIGHT BE GOOD FOR YOURS, TOO!
I'LL WORK ON HIM, ALFRED. I PROMISE - I'LL WORK ON HIM!
END

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Dear Kelley,

Anton Furst
1944—1991

Gotham will never be the same.

Dave Lane
Calgary, Alberta
Canada

*****

Dear Editors,

I thank you, Anton Furst, for dreaming up the grandest Gotham City that anyone could have imagined. You will be missed.

David M. Burnett, Jr.
Oregon City, OR

*****

Dear Batman Crew,

Just wanted to drop you a line to tell you how much I enjoyed "Destroyer" part one. When I heard that the comics version of Gotham would be redesigned in the image laid out by Anton Furst for the *Batman* movie, I was ecstatic. When I heard that this radical change in the city would even be *explained* in a storyline, I was skeptical. But after reading BATMAN #474, and getting some idea of the direction in which this story is going, I'm ecstatic again. So far, it looks great. I was very sorry to hear about Furst's death; his designs for the movie impressed me, and his talent is indisputable. It is our gain that his work was seen in your comics before his passing; this way, in a sense, he is immortal. Thanks for listening.

Scott Haan
Lafayette, IN

Thank you, Scott, David and Dave, for writing.

*****

Dear Batpeople,

I picked up BATMAN #474 a few days after reading about Anton Furst's tragic death. The loss is hammered home by the stark beauty of his designs of Gotham, which appear to be the focus of this historic crossover.

Breyfogle's Batman seemed to leap off the cover—the protector of the city burning like a beacon in the grim, stark darkness of Anton's design.

Simply stunning. The interior art was prime Breyfogle, especially page 18. The story is off to a great start—the Destroyer systematically stripping away the ugly modern features of Gotham to reveal its buried antique beauty with no regard for the cost, like some mad plastic surgeon recreating a person's face without consent. And the Wayne Foundation building is next. When you guys say, "The crossover that changes everything," you really mean it! I am eagerly awaiting part two in LOTDK.

My only complaint for this issue was the lack of the lettercol. Bring it back next issue, please.

Battily,
Rick Le Mieux
Inverness, FL

*****

Dear Denny,

Part one of the "Destroyer" series was certainly entertaining. The wonderful designs of the brilliant Anton Furst were a great asset to the book. It is truly a shame that he is no longer with us.

Norm Breyfogle certainly has become THE Batman artist of the late 80's and the early 90's. He works on the regular comic while other artists of the super-ego set stick to specialty books. I am glad he has a bigger audience.

Steven L. Shrewsbury
Illinois

So are we, Steven.

*****

Dear Kelley,

With Anton Furst now dead, "Destroyer" seems like a fitting tribute to his artwork. BATMAN #474 was great. Alan Grant's script was excellent, with a neat plotline for the story to run on. The concept was interesting, and I can't wait for Batman to delve further into it.

Norm Breyfogle's art, as usual, was stunning. While Jim Aparo's Bat may be definitive, Breyfogle's is the 90's Batman, a sight by which to be terrified. I believe there is a touch of Gene Colan in there, too. Norm probably will make Furst's Gotham look the best (out of Aparo or the LOTDK team) and a very moody place, as in the movie. I must admit, though, that I am scared by the prospect of Furst's Gotham becoming DC's Gotham. It just seems so eerie... let's have Superman drop by and give his seal of approval to this "new" Gotham. I bet this change (if permanent) will affect our denizens of Gotham in a huge way.

The cover deserves credit, also (by Breyfogle and Furst, I assume?), as does colorist Adrienne Roy. Her coloring enhances the art greatly, and she rarely gets the credit she deserves.

Joey Marchese
Clark, NJ

*****

Hey, Denny and Kelley,

I have only three things to say about BATMAN #474:

1) Alan Grant's story was interesting, if a little implausible.

2) Norm Breyfogle's art was mediocre at its best, and annoying at its worst.

3) IF TIM DRAKE DOESN'T RETURN TO THIS TITLE IN THE NEXT ISSUE, I AM SENDING LOBO AFTER YOU GUYS!!!

There, now, wasn't that fun?

Jason Crase
Arlington Heights, IL

It was okay.

*****

Dear Bat-People,

In a word, BATMAN #474 was, well, phenomenal!!!

I must confess that for the past month or so, I was disappointed in Batman. I didn't much care for the "Idiot Root" storyline, with the exception of Norm's mind-blowing artwork. The first part of "Destroyer" has, however, reaffirmed my faith. The story moved along very nicely and the art—oh God, the ART!

I've been a solid reader of ALL the Batman books for several years ('TEC #513 was my first comic) and pages 16 and 18 of #474 were examples of primo Batman artwork the likes of

Continued on page 32...

which I haven't seen in years.

Anyway, if the rest of "Destroyer" is as impressive as the first part —folks, we're watching history.

Dave Wright
Wilmington, DE

*****

Dear Kelley,

After the "Idiot Root" saga I felt that Batman had reached a peak and was going to take a downturn for a few issues. I mean, the "Idiot Root" was perhaps the best Batman story of 1991, and the art by Breyfogle and Aparo was easily their best work yet. The entire story seemed to capture my attention the way only the best of issues can.

But you surprised me! Part one of "Destroyer" was absolutely fantastic! First of all, the cover: I would have dished out my buck for this work of art alone! This is the Gotham City all Batman fans have dreamed about since seeing the Batman movie. The image of the Batman swinging across this new Gotham is more than any fan could hope for. And after this it would have been so easy to put together some stupid plot about alternate dimensions, or some other hoax just to supersede the old Gotham City with this new version (or is that the other way around?), but Alan Grant has put together a story that matches the excellent cover and the "new" Gotham City.

The plot had that edge that has been missing from many recent Batman stories. The character development that occurred when the Batman momentarily lost control when confronting Grean was superb. Shouting out, "You callous piece of filth!" while smashing Grean's bottle went a long way toward restoring the Batman's image as a dark, gritty hero.

On the flip side, I'm glad that upcoming issues of BATMAN are going to take a closer look at Bruce Wayne. While the Batman should be portrayed as the Dark Knight, Bruce should be allowed to lighten up and develop a personality of his own. Unfortunately, it seems like it has been a long time since the Bruce side of Batman has been explored. The upcoming (potential) revelation of his identity to Vicki Vale is exactly the character development I would like to see. I say go for it, because it would help develop Bruce beyond that of the Batman's secret identity.

By the way, I know Robin's been busy fighting the Joker recently, but please show him again in the pages of BATMAN and DETECTIVE soon. I know he won't be used in *Batman Returns*, but still feature him alongside the Batman occasionally.

James Evans
Madison, WI

Okay.

*****

Dear Bat-Signals,

BATMAN #474. Wow! What an issue. Great cover, great story, great art, all in one. The older Gotham was wonderfully done. After seeing Sarah Essen, it made me wonder when will Jim and Sarah's wedding be.

See you next issue.

Chris Collier
(address not on letter)

*****

Dear Denny and Crew,

"Destroyer" part one was really good! It's great to see the "detective" in Batman again, as well as the action-packed crimefighter.

The "Destroyer" wouldn't be a revamped version of the old Batman foe, the Quakemaster, though with a significant twist? The fact that he does it for the art is a brilliant plot move by Mr. Grant, though all of Mr. Grant's work is brilliant in my book!

I'm hoping the "Destroyer" will return again after awhile. Definitely add him to the Bat-man's rogues gallery!

In closing, I love the cover! The background was great!

Bob Elinskas
Utica, NY

*****

OVER IN DETECTIVE: On sale now, it's the second part of the "Electric City" storyline. Can Batman really be dead? In a word...sure can. It's up to Robin to save the day. But is he up to it? Find out in DETECTIVE COMICS #645, by Chuck Dixon, Tom Lyle and Scott Hanna.

NEXT ISSUE: It's the debut of our new creative team. Joining ever-amazing Jim Aparo, ladies and gentlemen, please welcome master writer Doug Moench, author of BATMAN & DRACULA: RED RAIN. Together Doug and Jim bring you a tale of madness inside and outside Arkham Asylum, starring none other than Maxie Zeus his own bad self. Be here in just two weeks, for BATMAN #481, "Messenger of Zeus."

—Scott Peterson
ready for a flying chair attack

From the Den

He does what he does better than anyone else alive, and for years I've admired him tremendously. Yet, lately, my enjoyment of his work has been shaded a bit. I ask myself why.

It may be that this man has represented, among many other things, a set of values. They're not *my* values—at least, they haven't been for decades. But I regard them with fond nostalgia and in some bad moments I regret ever having abandoned them. I was glad that this man, who is so gifted, so obviously intelligent, *didn't* abandon them.

Well, maybe he has. A few items in the papers recently indicate that, although he still seems to promote these values, he doesn't *live* them. I find myself feeling a little betrayed. The word *hypocrite* flutters in my mind.

It would be inane to judge the man. I don't know the circumstances of his private life and anyway, I'm in no position to cast the first stone. But I can't help feeling a trifle cool toward the work that I once cherished—I wish I could.

Which is one of the nice things about fiction. In made-up worlds, only the skill and art of the creators cause surprises; your opinion won't be changed for the worse by an item you happen to read in a gossip column. Heroes stay constant.

Except when they don't. But that's a topic for another time. Meanwhile, I hope you enjoyed this issue.